

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An article for grooming an animal, comprising:
a housing, said housing having an outer gripping surface; and
a longitudinally extending grooming tool, at least a portion of said longitudinally extending grooming tool being mounted within said housing for longitudinal sliding movement with respect to said housing, whereby a user may adjust the longitudinal position of the grooming tool with respect to said housing while continuously maintaining a grip on said outer gripping surface, wherein said grooming tool is adjustable in a first direction to a first extended longitudinal position with respect to said housing and said grooming tool is further adjustable in a second direction opposite said first direction to a second extended longitudinal position with respect to said housing.
2. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 1, wherein said longitudinally extending grooming tool comprises a comb having a longitudinal axis and a plurality of tines that extend substantially perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis.
3. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 2, wherein said comb has a length that is no greater than a length of said housing.
4. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 2, wherein said comb is adjustable to a retracted longitudinal position with respect to said housing wherein said outer gripping surface is substantially centered with respect to said plurality of tines.
5. (Currently amended) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 4, wherein when said comb is ~~further adjustable to an~~ in said first extended longitudinal position with respect to

said housing ~~wherein~~ said outer gripping surface is substantially longitudinally offset from said plurality of tines.

6. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 1, wherein said outer gripping surface is textured to facilitate a firm grip thereon.

7. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 6, wherein said outer gripping surface is fabricated from a resilient elastomeric material.

8. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 2, wherein said comb is configured to have a first coarse group of tines that are spaced from each other by a first distance and a second fine group of tines that are spaced from each other by a second distance that is less than said first distance.

9. (Currently amended) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 8, wherein said comb may be adjusted in a said first direction to said first extended longitudinal position with respect to said housing so as to permit efficient use of said first coarse group of tines, and wherein said comb may alternatively be adjusted in a said second direction to second extended longitudinal position that is opposite from said first direction to permit efficient use of said second fine group of tines.

10. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 1, further comprising at least one predetermined stop position of longitudinal adjustment of said grooming tool with respect to said housing.

11. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 10, further comprising means for releasably positioning said grooming tool in said at least one predetermined stop position.

12. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 1, further comprising locking means for locking said longitudinally extending grooming tool in a desired position with respect to said housing.

13. (Original) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 1, wherein said longitudinally extending grooming tool comprises a comb having a shank portion and a plurality of tines, and wherein at least a portion of said shank portion is mounted for longitudinal sliding movement within said housing while said tines are positioned externally of said housing so as to be available for grooming use.

14. (Currently amended) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 2, wherein said ~~times~~ tines are rotatably mounted with respect to said comb.

15. (Currently amended) A method of grooming an animal, comprising steps of:

(a) gripping an outer gripping surface of a grooming article that includes an elongated grooming tool, wherein said elongated grooming tool is adjustable in a first direction to a first extended longitudinal position with respect to said outer gripping surface and in a second direction opposite said first direction to a second extended longitudinal position with respect to said outer gripping surface;

(b) adjusting the elongated grooming tool to a desired longitudinal position with respect to the outer gripping surface while maintaining a grip on the outer gripping surface; and

(c) grooming the animal with the elongated grooming tool while gripping the outer gripping surface.

16. (Original) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 15, wherein said elongated grooming tool comprises a comb having a longitudinally extending shank portion and a plurality of tines that extend substantially perpendicularly with respect to said longitudinally extending shank portion.

17. (Original) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 16, wherein step (b) is performed by adjusting the comb so that said plurality of tines are substantially centered with respect to the outer gripping surface.
18. (Original) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 16, wherein step (b) is performed by adjusting the comb so that said plurality of tines are longitudinally offset from the outer gripping surface.
19. (Currently amended) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 16, wherein said comb further has a first coarse group of tines that are spaced from each other by a first distance and a second fine group of tines that are spaced from each other by a second distance that is less than said first distance, and wherein step (b) is performed by moving said elongated grooming tool in said first direction to said first extended longitudinal position wherein longitudinally offsetting said first coarse group of tines are longitudinally offset from said outer grip portion more than said second fine group of tines are longitudinally offset from said outer grip portion.
20. (Currently amended) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 16, wherein said comb further has a first coarse group of tines that are spaced from each other by a first distance and a second fine group of tines that are spaced from each other by a second distance that is less than said first distance, and wherein step (b) is performed by moving said elongated grooming tool in second direction to said second extended longitudinal position wherein longitudinally offsetting said second fine group of tines are longitudinally offset from said outer grip portion more than said first coarse group of tines are longitudinally offset from said outer grip portion.
21. (Original) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 15, wherein step (b) is performed by positioning the elongated grooming tool in a predetermined stop position with respect to the outer gripping surface.

22. (Original) A method of grooming an animal according to claim 15, further comprising a step of locking the elongated grooming tool in the selected position after the adjustment that is performed in step (b).

23. (New) An article for grooming an animal, comprising:

a housing, said housing having an outer gripping surface and an inner gripping surface, wherein said inner gripping surface is contoured; and

a longitudinally extending grooming tool, at least a portion of said longitudinally extending grooming tool being mounted within said housing for longitudinal sliding movement with respect to said housing, whereby a user may adjust the longitudinal position of the grooming tool with respect to said housing while continuously maintaining a grip on said outer gripping surface, wherein said grooming tool is adjustable in a first direction to a first extended longitudinal position with respect to said housing and said grooming tool is further adjustable in a second direction opposite said first direction to a second extended longitudinal position with respect to said housing, wherein in movement to said first extended longitudinal position or said second longitudinal position permits access to said inner gripping surface.

24. (New) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 23, wherein said longitudinally extending grooming tool comprises a comb having a longitudinal axis and a plurality of tines that extend substantially perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis.

25. (New) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 24, wherein said tines are rotatably mounted with respect to said comb.

26. (New) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 23, further comprising at least one predetermined stop position of longitudinal adjustment of said grooming tool with respect to said housing.

27. (New) An article for grooming an animal according to claim 24, further comprising means for releasably positioning said grooming tool in said at least one predetermined stop position.